

*Horseshoe
Bend Division*

Upland game hunting is allowed from September 1 until September 15 and December 1 until February 28 in accordance with state seasons and regulations. Spring turkey hunting is allowed in accordance with state seasons and regulations.

*Keithsburg
Division*

Squirrel hunting is allowed from the beginning of the state season until September 15.

Louisa Division Closed to upland game hunting.

*Big Timber,
Louisa Divisions,
Iowa River
Corridor*

Sport Fishing

Sport fishing is allowed all year in accordance with state seasons and regulations except where otherwise posted. The Louisa Division is closed from September 15 until January 1 with the exception of the boat ramp and fishing pier access at the inlet structure. Boats and all other fishing devices must be removed at the end of each day's fishing. Fishing is allowed from sunrise to sunset.

*Horseshoe
Bend Division*

Fishing is allowed from December 1 until September 15 in accordance with state seasons and regulations.

Motor boats are allowed for fishing only during the periods when flood water enables access from the river over the levee.

*Keithsburg
Division*

Fishing is allowed from January 1 until September 15. However, the Spring Slough parking area is open to fishing all year. A sign is present to designate the closed area boundary beyond the gate.

The taking of turtles or frogs is not allowed on the refuge.

Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters
10728 County Road X61
Wapello, Iowa 52653

fws.gov/refuge/port_louisa
Email: portlouisa@fws.gov
319/523 6982

People with hearing impairments may contact the refuge through the Federal Relay Number at 1 800/877-8339.

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1 800/344-WILD
www.fws.gov

For information on state hunting license and state regulations in Iowa, please contact the Iowa Department of Natural Resources at 515/725 8200.
TTY: 800/735 2942

For information on state hunting licenses and state regulations in Illinois, please contact the Illinois Department of Natural Resources at 217/782 7454
TTY: 800/735 2942



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Port Louisa

National Wildlife Refuge

Public Use Regulations





This blue goose, designed by J.N. "Ding" Darling, has become a symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.



Mallards, R. Johnson, USFWS



Open Seasons

Refuge Facts

Port Louisa National Wildlife Refuge was established in 1958 for the protection of migratory birds and covers 8,375 acres along the Mississippi and Iowa Rivers.

The refuge includes four divisions: Big Timber, Horseshoe Bend, Louisa all in Louisa County, Iowa and Keithsburg in Mercer County, IL. The refuge headquarters is located on the Louisa Division.

The 9,300-acre Iowa River Corridor in Benton, Iowa, and Tama Counties in Iowa is also part of Port Louisa NWR but is managed by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. There are also state lands in the Iowa River Corridor. Please be aware of which property you are on as regulations may be different between state and federal lands.

Parking lots, information kiosks, overlooks, and trails are provided for visitors on some areas of the refuge. See the refuge general brochure for locations.

General Regulations

Port Louisa refuge offers many opportunities for recreation including hunting, fishing, wildlife observation, photography, environmental education, and interpretation.

To help meet the primary refuge purpose of providing migratory waterfowl with food, water, and protection, some refuge areas are closed to public use during fall migration.

Big Timber – Year ‘round
Horseshoe Bend – December 1-September 15
Keithsburg – January 1-September 15
Louisa – January 1-September 15
Iowa River Corridor-Year ‘round

The refuge is open to public use during daylight hours only.



Special group trips related to wildlife dependent education (school groups, scouts, etc.) are encouraged. Guided group tours may sometimes be arranged in advance by contacting the refuge.

Bicycling is allowed on refuge roads unless otherwise posted.

Hiking, snowshoeing, and cross country skiing are allowed on the refuge. Hiking trails are available on some areas of the refuge.



Canoeing and kayaking are allowed and there is a designated water trail on the Louisa Division.



Pets must be on a leash except when used for the purpose of hunting where hunting is allowed.



Berry and mushroom gathering are allowed for personal consumption only and not for any commercial use.

Shed antler collecting is not allowed.

Fires are not allowed on the refuge.

Overnight mooring of boats is not allowed.

Vehicles are allowed only where designated.



ATVs and UTVs are not allowed on the refuge.

Camping is not allowed. All state and federal no wake regulations apply.

The discharge of weapons on the refuge when not engaged in authorized hunting is not allowed.

Trapping is allowed only in the Iowa River Corridor according to state regulations.

Big Game Hunting

Portable stands may be used where hunting is allowed, but they must be removed at the end of each day’s hunt. No nails, screws, or other hardware may be used to climb or secure blinds to the trees.

Big Timber Division, Iowa River Corridor

White-tailed deer hunting is allowed in accordance with state seasons and regulations.

Horseshoe Bend Division

Closed to all public access from September 15 until December 1. Big game hunting is allowed beginning December 1.

Keithsburg, Louisa Divisions

Closed to big game hunting.

Big Timber Division, Iowa River Corridor

Migratory Bird Hunting

Migratory bird hunting is allowed in accordance with state seasons and regulations. Portable blinds are allowed on a daily basis. Hunters must possess and use only nontoxic shot.

Horseshoe Bend, Keithsburg, Louisa Divisions

Closed to migratory bird hunting.

Upland Game Hunting

Includes small game, furbearers, turkey, and game birds (except migratory birds).



Successful Hunt! USFWS

Nighttime hunting of furbearers is not allowed.

Hunters must possess and use only nontoxic shot while hunting upland game.

Big Timber Division

Upland game hunting is allowed in accordance with state seasons and regulations from September 1 until February 28. Spring turkey hunting is allowed in accordance with state seasons and regulations.